

the proposal of the governors, he could scarcely have hit upon snrner means. He fairly compelled Eoosevelt to take one of two courses—either defend his principles or abandon them, and no one could have known better than Mr. Taft must have known what Roosevelt's choice would be. That he decided at once to be a candidate, and that personal considerations had nothing whatever to do with his decision, is too clear to dispute. Neither his past nor present personal relations with Mr. Taft entered into the matter at all. It was purely a question of principles and Mr. Taft's own utterances showed how hopeless agreement on them had become.

Before answering the letter of the governors, Eoosevelt went to Columbus, Ohio, and on February 21 delivered an address before the Ohio Constitutional Convention, on "A Charter of Democracy,"³¹ which by its radical utterances made it virtually impossible for the Republican National Convention to nominate him. While passing through Cleveland on his way to Columbus on February 21, he was asked if he was to be a candidate and in replying he used a phrase which became famous: "My hat is in the ring. You will have my answer on Monday." In this speech at Columbus he declared himself in favor of the initiative and referendum proposals and of the recall of judicial decisions, while at the same time reiterating and reaffirming his views in regard to corporations and trusts and other subjects. He had, as I have noted in a previous chapter, favored the recall of judicial decisions in his speeches in

the West in
1911, but in his Columbus address he stated
his views on
the question with far greater emphasis. The
address fairly
startled the conservative sentiment of the
country, and
alienated hundreds of thousands of
Republican voters. If
he had studied to make his own nomination by
the Bepubli-
can Convention impossible he could not have
hit upon a
surer course. It was a plain defiance to the
leaders of the
party and a notification that they could hope
for no com-
promise of principles from him; that he valued
loyalty to
those principles above any support that they
were able to